Salinger Says He Selected Manchester

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Milton, Mass., April 14 (AP) —Pierre Salinger, who was press secretary to the late President Kennedy, says it was he, and not Mrs. Kennedy, who selected William Manchester to write the book, "The Death of a President", about the assassination.

Salinger said that Manchester made an agreement and failed to keep it.

"It was not Mrs. Kennedy who chose him to write the book; I'm ashamed to say that it was I who selected Manchester, and I negotiated the contract with him," he said.

Salinger, who was here to deliver a lecture last night at Curry College, said the contract was made within 60 days of the assassination, and when those close to the late President still were under heavy stress.

"In retrospect, I probably would not have hired any writer —but this is hindsight," he said.

"Mrs. Kennedy told him many things—feeling that she had the protection of the contract—and after that many things happened. One of them was $650,000 —that could change many things."

Manchester reportedly received that amount for the publication of excerpts from his book in Look magazine.

"You must remember that Manchester's description of what people did and said and remember of that time was of people who were under very heavy stress. Can anyone expect people like that to be rational, completely coherent? I know I was 8,000 miles way and I wasn't," he said.

Salinger said that he is convinced the Warren Commission "accurately pinpointed the assassin and that he acted alone."

He said that he did not think that the writers of several books who have cast doubt on the Warren Report "have added anything to our knowledge.